

## American Geographical Society

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The Jewish Problem

Das Judentum als landschaftskundlich-ethnologisches Problem by Siegfried Passarge  
*Geographical Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Apr., 1930), pp. 352-353

Published by: [American Geographical Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/208902>

Accessed: 08/05/2014 23:21

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glaciers impend the valleys, and the view of the ice-covered Meije from above La Grave is counted by the reviewer as one of his great adventures.

Allix, now in charge of the geographic work of the University of Lyon, is a protégé of Raoul Blanchard and a confirmed member of the school of alpine geographers. True to the school's tradition he starts his thesis with a chapter on geology. We are told of gabbros, the Trias, and faults within the crystallines which have little human significance. Again, we find reference to fossil peneplains which have little or no life relationships. Are we not as geographers called upon to select such elements of geology and physiography as we can use in indicating causal relationships and there cease our encroachment on the physical sciences? We must look on geology and physiography as basic data for geographic conclusions, for we hasten to admit that it is physical circumstance that has created the individuality of life responses in the Oisans.

The chapter on climate is a storehouse of truly geographic information. A device (p. 118) to show the possible insolation at given points is remarkably clever. But in the chapter on glaciers the author lapses into glaciology. It is an excellent chapter but extraneous to the geography. With the chapter on the waters the author returns again to geographic matters with which he consistently and lucidly maintains contact to the end of the book.

The second part treats in turn the settlement, occupation of the soil, habitat, rural economy, transportation, tourism, mines, manufacturing, and population. In treatment this alpine school has developed technique that might well be imitated. I searched the section on permanent habitations (56 pages) to find what use had been made of matters of gabbro, Trias, or fault. One interesting map associates fields and houses with soils of crystalline and calcareous base and properly so. That was all.

The book is one of great industry and scholarship. Moreover, the style is excellent. It will take a deserved place among the classics of its field.

In "L'Oisans au Moyen-Age" Allix refers to the inspiration of what he terms "the celebrated memoir of Albert Demangeon" (*Les recherches géographiques dans les archives, Ann. de Géogr.*, Vol. 16, 1907, pp. 193-203). His own study of the Oisans in the Middle Ages is made up of careful piecing of facts from fragmentary archives as old as the twelfth century. The investigation of the historical boundaries of the Lac de St. Laurent is especially interesting for its exposition into the methods of historical research. An ample appendix of source material gives us further insight in the process of the study.

RODERICK PEATTIE

#### THE JEWISH PROBLEM

SIEGFRIED PASSARGE. *Das Judentum als landschaftskundlich-ethnologisches Problem*. 460 pp.; maps, diagrs., ill., bibliogr., index. J. S. Lehmann, Munich, 1929. M. 15. 9 x 6¼ inches.

Professor Passarge approaches the "Jewish Problem" from a new angle, that of the geographer and ethnologist. The Jewish problem is the question of the relation between Jews and gentiles the world over, a relation which Passarge thinks is very bad. "Since the movement of emancipation there have been violent outflarings of hatred" on the part of both Jews and non-Jews. Modern geography and ethnology, by shedding light on the origins and character of the Jews and their institutions, may help remedy a deplorable situation.

In the preface Passarge writes: "Never yet have I composed a scientific work so dispassionately as this, and there can be few books in the writing of which more care has been taken entirely to omit all emotion." A far-reaching comparative study of the physical make-up of the Jews and other folk leads to the conclusion that the former are not a distinctive race and that the Jewish problem is therefore not

to be solved in terms of somatic anthropology. Other Levantines—Armenians, Greeks, Christian Syrians—have “Jewish characteristics,” mostly objectionable, in Passarge’s opinion. The explanation of these characteristics is to be sought in the history and traditions of the people of the Near East, in whose development geographical factors have played a very large part. To show how this has worked out, Passarge delves deep into lore that is obscure and fascinating. To do justice to this part of the book a critical reviewer would have to be thoroughly versed not only in modern ethnology but in the history of Jewish theology and religious institutions.

Men in the Near East, Passarge writes, may be classified for the most part into two main types, *Sarts*, so called from the oasis dwellers of Turkestan, and *anti-Sarts* (see *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 17, 1927, pp. 514–515). The Sarts are the oasis folk, or townsfolk; the anti-Sarts are the rovers of the waste places. Most of the twelve cardinal virtues, political and cultural, which Passarge classifies in a characteristically schematic manner, would seem to reside among the anti-Sarts, whereas the cardinal vices—among them a tendency to form subversive secret societies—are to be found among the Sarts. A study of the Sarts and their manner of living makes clear, Passarge thinks, many of the darker aspects of life in the European ghettos.

“Monotheism is the religion of the oasis Sart. . . . Pure monotheism, however, is by no means the most favorable form of religion for cultural growth. Since it is based predominantly upon the intellectual life and gives only grudging recognition to the life of the emotions, it leads to atheism more rapidly and completely than does any other type of religion—to atheism which is the most inimical to culture of all metaphysical concepts.”

Elsewhere Passarge points out that the Germans are well endowed with many of the twelve cardinal virtues and hence should have been admirably adapted to assume world mastery. “A lack of the sense of political reality and an overdeveloped life of the emotions and imagination, however, have thrice brought about their fall . . . the third time when—misled by rabbinical teachings (*verführt durch Rabbinasten*)—the people were blinded to the world of fact by social and humanitarian enthusiasm. . . . Romans once and Britons in modern times possessed the weightiest of the cardinal virtues; possessed them—for recently England, under rabbinical influence, is losing the indispensable feeling for reality.”

These quotations may throw some light on Passarge’s point of view. We leave it to the reader to judge whether or not they are contradictory and whether or not they exemplify the coldly scientific attitude set up as an ideal. At all events, the book reveals profound learning and bright flashes of originality.

#### A MYTHICAL STRAIT

GEORGE E. NUNN. *Origin of the Strait of Anian Concept*. 36 pp.; maps. Privately printed, Philadelphia, 1929. \$2.00. 9 x 6 inches.

Long before Vitus Bering in 1728 sailed from the Arctic Ocean through the passage that now bears his name, the concept had existed of a “Strait of Anian” separating Asia from North America. The earliest known map on which this strait is named was made by the Venetian Bolognino Zaltieri in 1566, although there is reason to believe that his compatriot, Giacomo Gastaldi, had represented it on a map a few years before. At a later date the concept played an important part in the speculations of seekers for the Northwest Passage, and in modern times it has aroused the interest of many students of the history of geography. It scarcely need be said, however, that the idea was based entirely on theoretical considerations and does not reflect even dimly any knowledge of the actual lay of land and water to the north of Bering Sea.

From the time of Columbus to about 1560 America was generally believed to be